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Why is the **BIBLE** So **Hard** to UNDERSTAND?



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"Why is the Bible So Hard to Understand?"

Kyle Butt, M.Div.

Article In Brief...



The Bible reigns as the most widely distributed book ever printed. Yet, for all the billions of copies that have been distributed, it is often the case that many people do not read the book. When asked why they put off studying the Bible, many respond that they would like to read it, but it is so hard to understand that they have decided it is not worth the effort. Is it true that the Bible is so difficult to understand that its true meaning is only available to a few learned scholars? A brief study of the subject reveals that God has inspired a book that is understandable to even the youngest readers, but can spiritually challenge the most diligent student of the Word for a lifetime.

WHY IS THE BIBLE SO HARD TO UNDERSTAND?

MOST Christians who have ever tried to talk to someone about God have been asked why the Bible is so hard to understand. The idea behind this question is that if God is perfect and knows everything, and if He wants all people to know His will, then wouldn't He have written a very simple book that everyone could easily understand? Is the Bible really hard to understand? And if it is, why would a loving God write such a book?

Before Answering, Look Closely at the Question

Christians generally take the question at face value. We feel like we need to answer it the way it is presented, because we all know that we have run across passages that are difficult to get our minds around. The fact is, however, the question is worded in a way that **assumes** an idea to be true that is not. It is one of those questions that, if you answer it the way it is stated, you have painted yourself into a corner. We are all familiar with such questions. Someone might ask a man, "Have you stopped beating your wife?" A "yes" or "no" answer

assumes, or at least comes across as if, he was beating his wife at some point. If this man has never beaten his wife, then he needs to clarify the question. He might insist that he cannot answer the question as it is presented, since he has never beaten his wife. We can see how tricky such questions are designed to be. "Why is the Bible so hard to understand?" is one of those tricky questions. If you begin to answer it as it is presented, then you let the inquirer assume that the Bible as a whole is hard to understand. That is simply not the case. The Bible contains countless passages composed of thousands of words that are extremely easy to understand. The narrative of the wise men coming from the east to visit baby Jesus in Bethlehem is easy enough for small children to grasp (Matthew 1:18-2:12). The account of the Jewish rulers subjecting Jesus to a farce of a trial and deviously manipulating Pilate to have Him crucified is not hard to comprehend (Mark 14-15). The commandment to stop stealing and commit to respectable work is extremely easy to figure out (Ephesians 4:28). The vast majority of the Bible is rather easy to understand.

The question would be more accurately restated, "Why are some parts of the Bible hard to understand?" It certainly is true that some of the Bible is difficult to understand. The Bible itself admits as much. Peter wrote about the apostle Paul's writings, saying, "as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are **some things** hard to understand, which those who are untaught and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do

the rest of the Scriptures” (2 Peter 3:16).¹ The implication of this statement is that most things Paul says are quite understandable, but some things are more difficult than others. Peter goes on to explain that those who twist these difficult passages are “untaught” and “unstable.” He explains that they even do the same with aspects of the Bible (the rest of the Scriptures) that are **not** difficult to understand.

The situation can be illustrated by a comparison to the study of physics. Suppose a person asks, “Why is physics so hard to understand?” Anyone who has spent time in a classroom studying the equations of acceleration and other complicated mathematical formulas initially accepts the question as it is stated and tries to explain the more complicated aspects of the science. Not all aspects of physics, however, are difficult to understand. In fact, if you succeed in staying alive for an entire day, then you have a solid working idea of physics. Even young children, at an early age, learn you cannot jump off tall buildings, step in front of moving cars, dive face first onto concrete, throw baseballs at glass windows, stand under a falling tree, or jump off a bike speeding down a hill. The concept of gravity, though it can be broken down into complicated equations, can still be understood on a basic level by young children. Sure, the study of subatomic particles, relativity, or quantum physics can get cerebral rather quickly. It is still the case, however, that most people understand a huge amount of physics. Even so with the Bible, while it might be difficult to pinpoint who the number 666 is supposed

to represent (Revelation 13:18), or who the man of sin represents (2 Thessalonians 2:3), much of the Bible is very easy to understand. Love your neighbor, forgive others, feed the poor, help the sick, take care of widows and orphans, and pray for your enemies are instructions even the youngest among us comprehend.

You Are Only Expected to Know What You Should Know

Someone might ask, however, that if there are difficult parts of the Bible, then isn't it the case that all people must know even the most difficult parts in order to understand what God wants from them? The Bible answers that question by explaining that each person is only responsible for the aspects of God's Word that they **should** know. It is common sense that a person who has been a Christian for 30 years and has been given access to the Bible that entire time would understand God's Word better than a person who is a new Christian and has

just been exposed to the Word of God. The Bible illustrates this idea by comparing those who have had little opportunity to digest God's Word to babies who need milk and not solid food (1 Peter 2:2). As the “child” in the Word grows, he or she should progress to understanding more about God and His Word and begin to comprehend the more difficult aspects of the Bible. Sometimes, however, people who should be understanding more are not growing as they should. As the Hebrews writer scolded his readers, “For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need **milk** and not **solid food**. For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil” (Hebrews 5:12-14). Notice that the author

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recognized that at one time, his readers were “newborns” and were only responsible for grasping the milk of the Word. That time was past, however, and they had not trained themselves to understand more difficult aspects of the spiritual world. God will never hold people responsible for understanding more of His will than their life situations and capabilities afford. A 13-year-old who has just become a Christian will not comprehend as much about God and the spiritual world as a faithful Christian who has been studying the Bible for 50 years.

7 COMMON REASONS PEOPLE MISUNDERSTAND THE BIBLE

1: They Do Not Read It

THE primary reason many people do not understand the Bible is simply because they do not read it. Many people want to. They make resolutions to. They buy and read other books about it. They talk about reading it. They even start the beginning of each year determined to make it through the Bible. Sadly, however, all the resolve and talk seem to accomplish very little when it comes to actually reading the Bible. Ironically, people often complain that they do not read the Bible because it is difficult to understand. Of course it will be somewhat difficult to understand if we do not read it.

Any book that contains helpful information of any sort must be read in order to be understood. The Bible writers made this point perfectly clear. Paul said that God had revealed a message to him that he then put in written form to the Ephesians. He then stated, “by which, when you **read**, you may

understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ” (Ephesians 3:4). There were no hidden codes in the original language of Paul’s letter to the Ephesians. No special formulas were needed to uncover the “mystery” of Christ. They simply needed to read Paul’s inspired message recorded in the book of Ephesians (and the New Testament).

This idea of reading the Word carried with it an understanding that some who would be exposed to the Word could not read. In Revelation 1:3, the text states, “Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.” Many early church worship assemblies included a time when a reader would stand and read Scripture aloud, as is evident from Revelation 1:3. Both the listeners and the readers were then challenged to “keep the things” (obey) written in the Bible. It may be true that a person is a poor reader, or even has poor eyesight or another physical disability that keeps him from reading. The point, however, is clear: take the Word of God into your mind through reading or listening and apply it to your life. In 1 Timothy 4:13, Paul told Timothy, “Till I come, give attention to **reading**, to exhortation, to doctrine.” The NIV and ESV both translate this verse using “public reading,” meaning that Timothy was to publicly read the Scriptures to the Church regularly.

How is it that the successful stockbroker knows which stock to buy, when to buy it, and when to sell it? He studies the market, looks at data, listens to podcasts, and immerses himself in the infor-

mation. How is it that the extreme couponer knows how to buy certain foods at certain stores and clip and cut coupons to save thousands of dollars each year? She pours over the papers, the store ads, and the on-line sale material, spending hours just getting ready to go to the store. How does a successful doctor learn to treat patients with diseases or difficulties that the doctor herself has never seen? She studies the literature, reviews the latest test results, and looks to research and journals that provide the most up-to-date material on the issue. In a similar way, if you want to understand the Bible, you must “be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15). In order to understand the Bible, we simply must read it.

2: The “Flip-and-Point” Method

Many of us have done it. We will be lying in bed about ready to go to sleep, but we feel the need to have our “daily dose” of Bible. So, we roll over, grab our Bible off the bedside table and think that the Lord will somehow “show us” what He wants us to know by directing the Bible to flip open to the proper page for us at this particular time in our lives. We then flip the Bible open, drop our finger on the page, and begin to read. What happens when we flip to Job 22:3 and read Eliphaz’s comments, “Is it any pleasure to the Almighty that you are righteous? Or is it gain to Him that you make your ways blameless?” Eliphaz goes on to accuse Job, “Is not your wickedness great, and your iniquity without end? For you have taken pledges from your

brother for no reason, and stripped the naked of their clothing” (22:5).² Or what do we do when we turn to Psalm 137:9 and read, “Happy shall he be who takes and dashes your little ones against the stone!”³ Or “Therefore I hated life because the work that was done under the sun was grievous to me, for all is vanity and grasping for the wind. Then I hated all my labor in which I had toiled under the sun, because I must leave it to the man who will come after me” (Ecclesiastes 2:17-18).

Such an unsystematic approach to the Bible will not fail to confuse even the most sincere. Imagine trying this flip-and-point method with the owner’s manual to your new phone. You might be trying to turn the phone on, but you flip to the section that tells about how to download pictures. This method would be a ridiculous way to figure out how to change a tire from your car manual while you are stranded on the side of the road with a flat. Imagine a poor algebra student practicing the flip method early in the semester and flipping to the back of the book and “diving in,” trying to grasp the concepts. In order to understand the Bible, we should make a dedicated effort to reading all of it in context in a systematic way. Of course, many passages in the Bible would be perfectly fine to read independently of others and require very little context or understanding of surrounding material. But a **habitual** flip-and-point approach will inevitably lead to misunderstanding and frustration.

3: Unfamiliar Ancient Customs and Practices

Moses penned the first five books of the Old Testament in the mid-1400s B.C. The last books of the New Testament were finished by A.D. 100. That means that in modern times, we are separated from even the latest parts of the Bible by almost 2,000 years. At times, the customs and practices of the ancient world are unfamiliar to us, which leads us to misunderstand what the text is trying to say. For instance, Proverbs 20:11 says, “Diverse weights and diverse measures, they are both alike, an abomination to the Lord.” The ESV says, “Unequal weights and unequal measures.” What is so bad about “diverse” or “unequal” measures? Why does God hate them? In ancient times, merchants often bought and sold materials such as grain, gold, and silver that needed to be weighed. Dishonest merchants would have two sets of weights. They would use one set for buying and one set for selling.

Suppose a farmer brought his grain to the merchant and the broker agreed to buy one pound of grain. The crooked buyer would reach into his “buying” weight bag and pull out the weight marked “One Pound.” The weight was actually slightly heavier than one pound, so the merchant would get more than a pound of grain for the price of a pound. When the merchant went to sell the grain, he would pull out his “selling” weight marked “One Pound.” This weight would be less than a pound. So when he sold the “pound” it was actually less than a pound. The transaction of buying “one” pound and selling “one” pound would gain the corrupt businessman more grain when it should have been an exactly equal trade. The two differing weights were marked the same, but their weights were different. Knowing this ancient custom helps us understand that the Proverbs writer is condemning corrupt, dishonest business practices.

(cont. on p. 44)

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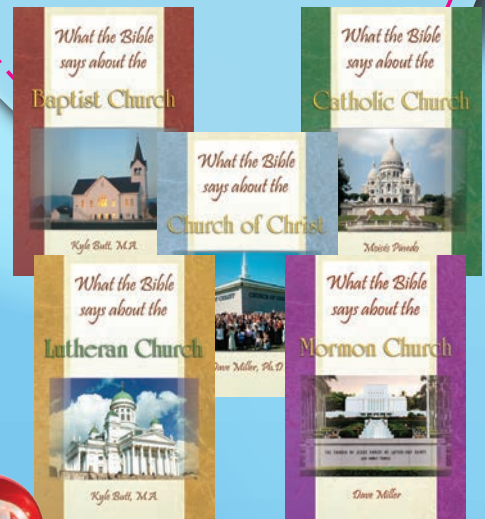
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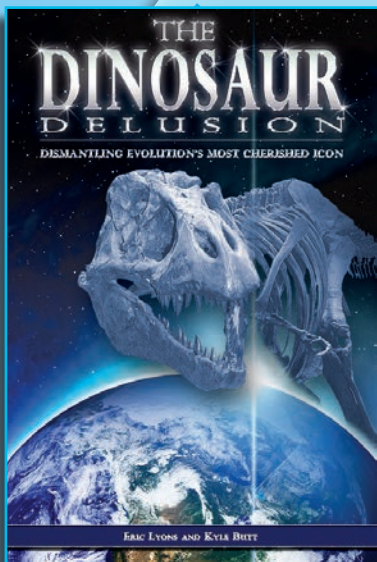


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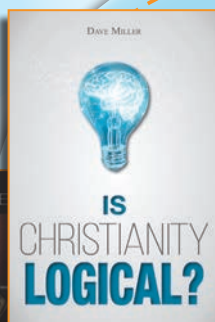
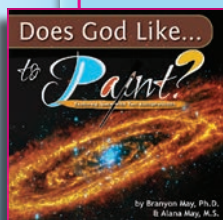
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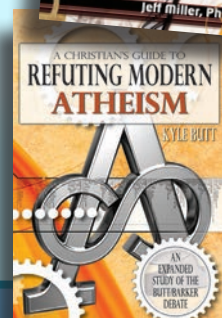
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4: Confusing and Inaccurate Translations

We have all heard the term “lost in translation.” The process of translating a message from one language to another language is a tricky business. Those who have taken on the responsibility of translating the Bible from its original languages have often taken the job very seriously and taken great pains to get the translations as accurate as possible. The end product has been a number of very useful and accurate versions and translations of the Bible. For all that effort, however, it is important to understand that there is no perfect translation. The original message that God inspired directly to the original writers that is contained in the original manuscripts of the Bible is God-breathed, but translations of that message are not. Therefore, we sometimes see poor translations of certain passages causing confusion and misunderstanding.

One such passage is found in Acts 2:29. In this context, Peter preached the first recorded Gospel sermon to those in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. He used Old Testament prophecy to verify that Christ died, but that He also rose from the grave. He quoted from Psalm 16 and stated that the writer of that psalm, King David, “seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ that his soul was not left in **hell**, neither his flesh did see corruption” (Acts 2:29, KJV). The picture that this translation of Acts 2:29 paints is that Jesus went to hell, where the sinful lost will be consigned for eternity. In fact, this verse has been used to teach that those in hell at that time were given a second chance to repent at

the teachings of Jesus. This unfortunate translation has further lent itself to the concept of purgatory and the idea that once a person is dead, there will be a second chance to obey God in the afterlife.⁴

The inaccuracy lies in the use of the word “hell.” The Greek text actually uses the word *hades*. *Hades* is the word for the realm of all the dead. It is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew word *sheol*, and it makes no differentiation between those who die in a saved state or those who die in a lost state. It is simply the realm of all the dead, whether righteous or wicked. The concept of hell, however, is associated with the wicked dead. We read in Mark 9:43, “If your right hand makes you sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed, than having two hands, to go to hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched, where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.” This verse discusses **hell**, but it does not use the word *hades* (the realm of all the dead). It uses the word *gehenna*, which is where the “fires of hell” will burn forever. Jesus never went to *gehenna*. In fact, just the opposite is the case. While on the cross, the penitent thief asked Jesus to remember him when the Lord came into His Kingdom. Jesus responded to him, “Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise” (Luke 23:43). When Jesus died on the cross, He did not go to hell, He went to Paradise.

To further understand the situation, we turn our attention to Luke 16:19-31. This text contains the story of the rich man and Lazarus. The rich man apparently was greedy and apathetic to Lazarus’ poor, pitiful condition. The

text explains that they both died. They both entered into the realm of *hades*, the realm of all dead. They are, however, in different places in *hades*. Lazarus is in the realm of the dead in a place referred to as “Abraham’s bosom” (16:22). This would be the Paradise that Jesus mentioned to the thief on the cross. The text details the fate of the rich man, “And being in torments in *Hades*, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom” (16:23). Notice the place of “torments” was located in *hades* along with Abraham’s bosom. The text further notes that there was no way to cross from torment to Abraham’s bosom and that both fates of the dead Lazarus and rich man were sealed for all eternity (16:27). Going back to Acts 2, when Jesus died, He did not go to torments or *gehenna*, He went to *hades*, the realm of all the dead. *Hades* is currently divided into two sections: Paradise (Abraham’s bosom) and torments. Jesus went to Paradise, not torments. The mistranslation that Jesus went “to hell” confuses this situation and lends itself to any number of misunderstandings.

This type of misunderstanding and mistranslation can happen with the simplest matters. For instance, I once sat in a Bible class discussion on the life of Samson. The teacher had been telling about Samson’s poor choices of marrying a Philistine wife. Samson was forced to leave her for a time, but he wanted to see her again. The text explains, “But it came to pass within a while after, in the time of wheat harvest, that Samson visited his wife with a kid; and he said, I will go in to my wife into the chamber” (Judges

15:1, KJV). The teacher proceeded to explain that the two had a child together and that the “kid” was the result of their previous union. In fact, the kid was a large part of the teacher’s discussion. I was reading from the NKJV at the time, which states, “it happened that Samson visited his wife with a young goat.” The “kid” in this context was not a human child, it was a gift for his wife. Young goat is the proper translation here.

Did you know that unicorns are in the Bible? Numbers 23:22 says, “God brought them out of Egypt, he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn” (KJV). The prophet Isaiah wrote, “And the unicorns shall come down with them, and the bullocks with the bulls” (34:7, KJV). When you think of the word “unicorn,” what comes to your mind? If you are like most of us, you picture a perfectly white horse with a spiraling single horn projecting from the center of its majestic head. You probably also associate such a “creature” with magical fairy tales. Is the Bible referring to such a mythical creature? Again, this is just a case of a poor translation. The actual word in these verses is the Hebrew word *re’em*. It could be referring to a one-horned animal such as a rhinoceros, but most translators who have studied the word believe it is simply a wild ox.⁵ There is no hint of mythical, magical one-horned horses in these verses. Imagine the poor third-grade girl whose favorite creature is a unicorn coming across this unfortunate translation in the Bible! As was stated earlier, there are no perfect translations. The above examples are from the King James Version, but each translation has its own issues. It is the job of

the sincere Bible student to “be diligent” and put the work into finding out the real meaning of the text. Most of the time, other English translations render the meaning rather easily. Sometimes, however, it takes a little more work to ferret out what is being said.

5: Misleading Teachers

It is sad but true that one of the primary reasons people misunderstand the Bible is because they have been misled by their teachers. The Bible is filled with warnings about false teachers who will lead many away from the truth. Paul warned Timothy, “Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to **deceiving** spirits and the **doctrines** of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron” (1 Timothy 4:1-2). Paul told the Ephesian elders, “For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also, from among yourselves men will rise up, **speaking perverse things**, to draw away disciples after them” (Acts 20:29-30). Luke, the writer of Acts, explains that during the missionary work of Paul, Jewish teachers who opposed him “stirred up the Gentiles and **poisoned their minds** against the brethren” (Acts 14:2). Cult leaders such as Jim Jones, David Koresh, and Marshall Applewhite (Heaven’s Gate), provide testimony to the fact that persuasive teachers, tragically, can mislead their followers. Founders of religious movements such as Joseph Smith of the Mormons and Muhammed of Islam show the

power of false teaching and its ability to influence the masses.⁶

How can a person guard against being led away by false teaching? I once was at a Summer Camp where the late Jerry Jenkins was addressing this very issue. He had been preaching the Gospel for decades at the time and was an excellent communicator. The illustration went something like this. He stood before the gathering of young people and held up a Bible. “How many of you believe this Bible is 18 inches long?” The Bible was much smaller than that, as most of the audience could see, and no hands went up. He then talked about the importance of a standard and how we can’t just make up lengths; instead, we need something to measure them by. He pulled out a tape measure and put it next to the Bible and measured it. “Eight inches. Now how many of you in the audience believe the Bible is eight inches long?” Virtually the entire audience raised their hands. After all, he had measured the Bible using a legitimate standard. To the audience’s surprise, however, he exclaimed, “You are all wrong.” Then he took the tape measure and the Bible to a young person on the front row and asked the person to read the length—seven inches. Dr. Jenkins then explained that we should never accept what a person tells us the standard says. Instead, we should measure and see for ourselves. His point was clear: Just because someone tells you that the Bible says or means this or that, does not make it so. You should not take their word for it. You should check it out for yourself. This mode of operation is just what the Jews in Berea fol-

lowed when Paul and Silas came to their city to preach. The text states, “These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so” (Acts 17:11). The only way to avoid being led astray by false teaching is to compare the teaching to what the Scriptures say.

6: Heart Issues

We all like to think that we come to the biblical text with sincere hearts, wanting nothing more than to hear what God says to us. If we are honest, however, we know that certain teachings are harder to “understand” than others. It is not that the wording is confusing. It is that the teaching would force us to change the way we think or act in ways we would find very difficult. It may be that Jesus’ teaching on marriage and divorce in Matthew 19:1-9 means that a person would need to get out of an adulterous relationship. It may mean that what a person’s parents taught and lived is unscriptural, and to accept the Bible’s teaching on a subject would be to admit that one’s parents were mistaken. An accurate understanding of a text might mean what a person has taught thousands of people has been wrong, and the responsibility for such false teaching would be extremely difficult for that person to shoulder. Of all the reasons that people “misunderstand” the Bible, this one is probably the most common. We often come to the Bible, not to hear what God is **actually saying**, but to be justified in what we have already decided God **should be saying**.

This situation is not new. The book of Jeremiah provides an excellent example of what often happens. The Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem and took thousands of Israelites captive. They left a scattered remnant in the land. Those who were left gathered together to talk to Jeremiah about their options. They were trying to decide if they should flee to Egypt or stay in the land of Israel. They brought the question to Jeremiah to take before the Lord. They said, “Please, let our petition be acceptable to you, and pray for us to the Lord your God... that the Lord your God may show us the way in which we should walk and the thing we should do” (Jeremiah 42:2-3). The prophet agreed to take it before God and to come back to them with a divine answer. “Then they said to Jeremiah, ‘Let the Lord be a true and faithful witness between us, if we do not do according to everything which the Lord your God sends us by you. Whether it be pleasing or displeasing, we will obey the voice of the Lord our God to whom we send you’” (42:5-6). What a commendable attitude these people had. They professed sincerity and complete obedience to whatever God would tell them to do.

After 10 days, God spoke to Jeremiah and gave him directions for the people. God, through Jeremiah, told the people to stay in the land of Israel. He specifically and adamantly warned them not to go to Egypt. After Jeremiah delivered the message, the people responded, “You speak falsely! The Lord our God has not sent you to say, ‘Do not go to Egypt to sojourn there’” (43:2). They then disobeyed the message and fled to

Egypt. Jeremiah boldly declared, “For you were hypocrites in your hearts when you sent me to the Lord your God, saying, ‘Pray for us to the Lord our God, according to all that the Lord your God says, so declare to us and we will do it’” (42:20). How tragic it is that many people, like the Israelites, profess sincerity and an honest desire to know what God says. Their real approach, however, is not to find out what God is saying, but to find passages and ideas that justify what they already believe. They often “misunderstand” passages that teach something they do not want to hear.

One of the most powerful examples of this attitude happened in a Bible study focused on the plan of salvation. The subject of water baptism arose. The Christian conducting the study went to verses that discuss the importance and necessity of baptism for the forgiveness of sins and salvation.⁷ The man he was studying with vehemently denied that baptism was essential for salvation. He said that people are saved by faith alone and that no works, such as baptism, could be necessary for salvation. In fact, he said that the Bible does not teach that baptism saves a person. The Christian directed him to 1 Peter 3:21 and asked him to read the verse. The man turned to the passage and read, “The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also **not** save us (not the putting away...)” The Christian politely interrupted and asked the man to start at the beginning and read it again. He read, “The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also **not** save us (not the...)” Again, the man was asked to read the passage, “The like figure where-

unto even baptism doth also **not**....” Because of his preconceived notion on baptism, he mentally supplied the word **not** to the text. The text actually reads, “The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also **now** save us.”⁸ He supplied what he **thought** the text should say, and not what the text **does** say. This is a rather dramatic example. Most people don’t physically change the text as they read it. Many do, however, alter the meaning of the text in their mind to fit something they already believe. Let us all strive to avoid such an attitude and heed the words of James, when he said: “Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with **meekness** the implanted word which is able to save your souls” (James 1:21).

7: Some Parts of the Bible are Difficult

Even the most sincere Bible students readily admit that there are portions of the Bible that are difficult to understand. As stated earlier, the Bible itself admits as much—“in which are some things hard to understand” (2 Peter 3:16). It is tempting to respond to this fact with anxiety and wonder why a loving God would make anything in His Word difficult to understand. With a moment’s pause and consideration, however, we can see the wisdom of this. First, as noted earlier, we know that God will not hold people responsible for understanding ideas that they are incapable of grasping. God is a fair and righteous judge Who, as Abraham reminded us, always does that which is right (Genesis 18:25). Second, remember that we grow in our understanding and knowledge as we learn the Word and apply it

in our lives. If you are maturing as a Christian, you will know and understand more about God and spiritual truth a year from now than you know now. That process will continue as you age. Third, if it is true that a maturing Christian will grow in knowledge and understanding his or her entire life, that must mean that there are aspects of the spiritual world and God that are so deep they could occupy even the most brilliant, sincere, and dedicated Christians for an entire lifetime. In God’s wisdom, He provided His Word which can be understood by elementary children, but can be read and studied by the most advanced scholar for decades. Isn’t that exactly what we would expect from an all-knowing, all-loving God? That fact should lead us to pray to the Lord, as David did so long ago, “Open my eyes, that I may see wondrous things from Your law” (Psalm 119:18).

CONCLUSION

“**W**HY is the Bible hard to understand?” It is a question that many have asked. Before answering it, we must make sure we get the **question** right. The Bible is not hard to understand. Some parts of it are, but the bulk of it is rather straightforward. Unfortunately, the Bible is often misunderstood, due to the fact that many don’t read it. They may have a poor translation, they may not come to the text with an honest heart, or any number of other causes. It should be the goal of every truth seeker to diligently study God’s Word and to spend intentional effort and time in a systematic approach to the Bible. Ultimately, on the last day, our understanding of God’s

Word will be of utmost importance. As Jesus foretold while on Earth: “He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day” (John 12:48). There will be no pop quiz or novel information that God will demand us to know. He has not hidden any secret codes or mystical star readings. On the contrary, through the Bible, “His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness” (2 Peter 1:3).

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Emphasis in all Bible verses is added by the author unless noted.
- ² Job never did those things. Eliphaz was wrong and falsely accused Job in order to keep his mistaken theology about God allowing only the wicked to suffer.
- ³ For a discussion of this verse see Kyle Butt, “Psalm 137:9—Dashing Babies’ Heads Against a Stone,” Apologetics Press, <https://www.apologeticspress.org/apcontent.aspx?category=13&article=913>.
- ⁴ See Dave Miller’s article “Afterlife and the Bible,” Apologetics Press, <https://apologeticspress.org/article/1478>.
- ⁵ See “Unicorns, Satyrs, and the Bible,” Apologetics Press, <http://apologeticspress.org/apPubPage.aspx?pub=1&issue=504&article=177>.
- ⁶ Dave Miller (2009), “Is the Book of Mormon From God?” *Reason & Revelation*, 29[9]:65-71, September; Dave Miller (2005), *The Quran Unveiled* (Montgomery, AL: Apologetics Press).
- ⁷ Dave Miller, “13 Objections to Baptism,” Apologetics Press, <http://apologeticspress.org/apPubPage.aspx?pub=1&issue=1222>. Also Dave Miller (2019), *Baptism and the Greek Made Simple* (Montgomery, AL: Apologetics Press).
- ⁸ Of course, being immersed in water is only a part of God’s plan of salvation. Through immersion, a person spiritually contacts the blood of Christ, which is the only thing that has the power to forgive sins. See Kyle Butt’s article “In Christ,” Apologetics Press, <http://apologeticspress.org/APContent.aspx?category=11&article=1982>.



NOTE FROM *The Editor*



Spring Sale



From its inception, Apologetics Press has endeavored to live up to our status as a non-profit organization. All our prices are far below standard retail pricing—since our singular goal is to get our materials into the hands of those who need them. Most of our funding comes from interested supporters who believe in our work. However, we still must rely to some extent on funds collected from the sale of our products in order to keep the organization running.

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Dave Miller

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